

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A280.39
C762
Cop. 2

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

SEP 1 - 1966

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

The Federal Seed Act



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
CONSUMER & MARKETING SERVICE
GRAIN DIVISION • C&MS-49

IN A NUT-SHELL

The Federal Seed Act is a truth-in-labeling law which protects the farmer, marketer and consumer from mislabeled seed moving in interstate commerce. It provides for sampling of seeds to insure that labels show:

Seed purity—The percentage of each kind or variety of seed and the amount of weed seeds and other unwanted matter in the seed.

Place of origin—So the buyer can avoid certain seed that may not grow well in his locality.

Germination—The percentage of the seeds which are expected to grow into normal plants under ideal conditions.

It also supplements State seed laws in all 50 States by prohibiting the shipment of seed containing certain noxious-weed seeds into those States which outlaw or restrict them.

ASSURANCE OF GOOD SEED

Because of the Federal Seed Act, seed buying need not be a hit-or-miss proposition. The labels required on all seed moving across State lines give you all the information you need to start a successful planting.



The Federal Seed Act was passed by Congress in 1939 to give truth-in-labeling protection to farmers and other buyers of agricultural and vegetable seeds. It is administered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service and enforced with the cooperation of State seed agencies in each of the 50 States.

All States have seed laws requiring truthful labeling of seed offered for sale. The Federal Seed Act complements these laws by regulating seed moving between the States as well as seed imported into the U. S.

To assure you correct labeling, trained seed technologists examine and grow samples of vegetable and agricultural seeds to determine what kinds of seed are in the container and how much of each kind, the number of weed seeds, the percentage of inert matter (such as dirt and stones) and the percentage of seeds that are expected to produce normal plants. All of this information and more is on the label.

By requiring truthful labeling and by prohibiting false advertising, the Federal Seed Act enables you to make an intelligent selection based on fact—not fiction.





A

BN-13524—Purity Analysis—Seed analysts separate seed mixture to find out how much of each kind of seed or waste matter it contains.

B

Germination—N-55318—To determine the germination rate, seeds are rolled up on a paper towel and placed in a germinator where the temperature, humidity, and light are controlled 24 hours a day to provide optimum growing conditions. After specified periods of time the roll is removed from the germinator and the analyst counts the normal seedlings.

C

Growth Chamber—N-55308—One of the ways to determine whether varieties are correctly labeled is to study the mature plant. In this growth chamber, growing conditions are controlled to speed the plant to maturity.

HOW TO READ THE LABEL

Purity

You do not have to guess at the contents of a seed mixture. The Federal Seed Act requires detailed labels on all farm and grass seed to indicate the percentage of each kind of seed present. In addition, the percentages of all other materials, such as other crop seeds, weed seeds, and inert matter (chaff, dirt, stones, etc.) must be indicated.

Noxious-Weed Seeds

Some weed seeds are particularly harmful in certain areas of the country. Each State has a list of seeds which it considers "noxious," or harmful. The Federal Seed Act requires all farm and grass seed shipped in interstate commerce to be labeled to show the name and number of these seeds present. If they are present, they may not exceed the limits set by the State.

Origin

Certain seeds (alfalfa, red clover, white clover, and field corn other than hybrids) which are grown in one area of the country may not grow well in other areas. For this reason, the label must show the state or country of origin of these seeds as well as the name and address of the shipper or receiver. In this way you can be sure the seed you buy is suited to your locality.

Germination

The germination rate is important because it tells you what percentage of the seeds is expected to produce normal plants. A rate of 85 percent, for example, means that 85 out of every 100 pure seeds—given proper care and growing conditions—will develop adequately.

It's wise to check seed labels to see when the seed was tested for germination. Seed loses its ability to grow or develop as it becomes older—especially in warm, humid areas. Because of this, it must have been tested within six months before it leaves the State. In most States, it must have been tested within nine months prior to sale.

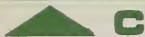
Vegetable Seed

The vegetable seeds you buy—for gardening or truck farming—require less labeling information than other agricultural and lawn seeds. The kind must be shown and also the name of the variety (Label for farm and lawn seeds do not have to list variety, but if they do, they must be accurate). Also, vegetable seeds with a germination rate below certain standards established by regulations under the Federal Seed Act must be plainly marked "Below Standard" and must show the percentage of germination and the date of the germination test.


Imported Seed

The USDA and the U. S. Department of the Treasury enforce the foreign-commerce provisions of the Federal Seed Act to insure that imported seed is the same quality as U. S. seed. Each lot of seed offered for import into the U. S. is sampled at the port of entry by customs inspectors and the sample is sent to one of the six Federal seed laboratories for testing—to make sure it meets the minimum standards of the Federal State Act before the seed lot is permitted to enter this country.





Seed Label—This is what to look for on the seed you buy. If you select seed adapted to your needs and growing conditions, you will be well on your way to a successful growing season.

 Farmers Seed Co.	
<small>(Name or code designation)</small> Farmersville, Iowa	
Clark 63 <small>(Variety)</small>	Soybean <small>(Kind of seed)</small>
Lot No. X-100	
Where grown Illinois	
Pure seed	99.00 %
Inert matter	.95 %
Weed seed .01 %	Crop seed .00 %
Germination	90 %
Hard seed	none %
Total germination and hard seed --- %	
Date of test March 1966	
<small>(Month)</small> None <small>(Year)</small>	
Noxious weed seeds ---	

VIOLATIONS

To determine whether seed is correctly labeled, State seed inspectors visit seed stores and routinely draw samples for testing by State and Federal seed laboratories.

Seed officials also examine seed catalogues and other seed advertisements to guard against false or misleading statements.

Violators may be prosecuted either in criminal proceedings or in civil suits. The seed may be seized by Federal courts and required to be relabeled, destroyed, or used for other purposes. Warning notices are sent to shippers for minor violations.

THESE ARE THE WAYS THE FEDERAL SEED ACT HELPS TO PROTECT YOU AND TO ASSURE FAIR COMPETITION IN THE SEED TRADE.



The Federal Seed Act is only one of many programs of the CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICE designed to improve the marketing of agricultural products and to protect the public in the purchase of food and other farm products.